

VZCZCXYZ0005
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHNR #0246/01 0390826
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 080825Z FEB 10
FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0691
INFO RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

UNCLAS NAIROBI 000246

SIPDIS
STATE FOR OES/ENRC LLOYD GAMBLE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [SENV](#) [KSCA](#) [AORC](#) [UNEP](#) [KE](#)
SUBJECT: KENYA SEEKS U.S. SUPPORT FOR ELEPHANTS; COP-15 DEMARCHE
DELIVERED

REF: STATE 6668; STATE 10014

¶1. Summary: In a February 1 meeting, the GOK sought U.S. support for its proposal to extend the ivory trade ban. The GOK said it has broad African support for the proposal. In the same meeting, econoff delivered reftel talking points on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The GOK supports the U.S. proposals related to shark, polar bear and snake trade; they requested additional information on the U.S. corals and bobcat proposals to better inform their positions. End Summary.

¶2. Econoff met February 1 with the following GOK officials from Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) to deliver ref A talking points and solicit feedback on the U.S. CITES submissions:

-- Patrick Omondi, Senior Assistant Director and Head of Species Conservation and Management, species@kws.go.ke

-- Dr. James Njogu, Head of Conventions and Research Authorization, conventions@kws.go.ke

-- Solomon Kyalo, Senior Scientist Biodiversity Conventions/Agreements, cites@kws.go.ke

These officials will be attending the CITES COP-15 in March 2010, along with Julius Kipng'etich, Director of KWS. It is unclear at this time whether Minister of Forestry and Wildlife, Noah Wekesa, will travel to the COP-15 as head of delegation. If not, Mr. Kipng'etich will act as head of delegation and can be reached at kipngetich@kws.go.ke.

GOK SEEKING SUPPORT FOR THE AFRICAN ELEPHANT

¶3. The GOK officials urged the U.S. to support proposal six to COP-15. This proposal is co-sponsored by Kenya and seven other African Elephant range states, extending the moratorium on ivory trade to twenty years and including all African Elephant Range states in the moratorium. The GOK put this proposal forward as a response to proposals four and five from Tanzania and Zambia to

down-list the elephant and to approve additional 'one-off' sales of ivory from both countries. Kenya, along with most members of the African Elephant Coalition (AEC), is strongly opposed to any proposal to down-list the elephant or to allow any trade in ivory.

¶4. Omondi emphasized the intent of the nine-year moratorium on ivory trade agreed to at COP-14 was to allow African Elephant Range states time to implement the African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP) for the comprehensive conservation and protection of elephants across the continent. Omondi, noting the continent-wide increase in poaching in the wake of the October 2008 'one-off' sales of ivory from Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and South Africa, stressed that the proposals from Tanzania and Zambia go against the spirit of the COP-14 agreement. Kenya strongly feels that the spirit of the agreement made at COP-14 be upheld and no further consideration of down-listing the elephant be tabled until COP-18 at the earliest. (Note: Omondi attended a meeting with EU officials last week in Brussels to garner support for proposal six and will appear before the House Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, Oceans, and Wildlife on February 11, 2010 to testify about the proposals related to the African elephant submitted for consideration at COP-15. End note.)

GOK SHOWS ITS SUPPORT

¶5. The GOK supports both U.S. proposals to list six shark species in Appendix II of CITES. Mr. Kyalo said they were familiar with the proposals because Kenya was asked by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in September 2009 to be co-sponsor of the proposals. He said Kenya considered co-sponsorship, but lacked time to do so before the October 14, 2009 deadline. Two representatives from the GOK will also attend the upcoming Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) meeting in Manila with the intent to sign the MoU for global migratory shark conservation and management (ref B). The officials were also supportive of our proposal to organize a workshop on snake trade regulation.

¶6. Regarding the polar bear, the GOK supports our proposal to transfer the polar bear from CITES Appendix II to Appendix I. Mr. Omondi said the U.S. may have difficulty reaching the two-thirds majority vote for the proposal unless it makes a strong case that polar bear population is being negatively affected by trade rather than a decrease in habitat area and quality. He asked if we had additional data specifically showing illegal trade activity to support the proposal. He said Kenya would share information with the other 22 member states of the AEC to advocate for our proposal.

NON-COMMITTAL ON CORALS AND BOBCAT

¶7. The GOK is non-committal on our proposal to list red and pink corals in Appendix II and to remove the bobcat from Appendix II. The CITES coordinators did not appear to be familiar with the proposals. They agreed to present the proposals to the technical committee which will meet twice before the CITES COP-15.

COMMENT

18. Poaching is on the rise in Kenya. In 2009, 232 elephants were illegally killed in Kenya, up from 145 in 2008 and 47 in 2007. Despite extensive monitoring capabilities, with daily surveillance flights and increased training and equipment provided to KWS rangers, Kenya views this as a disturbing trend and is concerned about its ability to maintain its elephant population. They consider down-listing of the African elephant as a threat to the survival of the species and are eager for U.S. support. End comment.

RANNEBERGER
RANNEBERGER